



Cameras in the Courts: Summary of State Court Rules

Knowledge & Information Services

Summary of TV Cameras in the State Courts

Summary of State Rules

States with Permanent Rules

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Summary of TV Cameras in the State Courts

AUGUST 1, 2001

All states that permit television, radio, and photographic coverage of courtroom proceedings, whether on a permanent or an experimental basis, have adopted rules or guidelines governing such coverage. The consent of the presiding judge is required in almost all states, and the judge has discretion to control the coverage during the proceedings. Many states require advance written application for permission.

Coverage is prohibited in nearly all states with respect to cases involving juveniles, and most states prohibit coverage of victims of sex crimes, domestic relations cases, and trials involving trade secrets. Voir dire coverage is generally prohibited. Coverage of jurors is either prohibited or is restricted to prevent visual identification of jurors. Some states prohibit coverage of witnesses who appear under subpoena, and many states deny coverage of victims or witnesses who object. All states ban coverage of conferences in court.

The guidelines generally include provisions with regard to media equipment, lights, number of media personnel, types of cameras, position of equipment operators, and movement in the courtroom.

The following tables indicate the current status of cameras in the courtroom in the various states.

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Summary of State Rules

States with Permanent Rules*	
Approved for Trial and Appellate Courts	36
Approved for Trial Courts Only	2
Approved for Appellate Courts Only	7
States with Experimental Rules*	
Approved for Trial and Appellate Courts	1
Approved for Trial Courts Only	4
Approved for Appellate Courts Only	3
*Note: Some states fall into more than one category	
Total States Allowing Cameras in a Courtroom	50
Total States Allowing Cameras in a Criminal Trial	37
States Where Cameras Are Not Permitted and No Rules Pending	0

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EFFECTIVE DATE			COURTS	
STATE	EXPERIMENTAL	PERMANENT	LEVEL	DIVISION
Alabama		2/1/76	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal*
Alaska	8/24/78	1/15/90	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Arizona	5/31/79	7/1/83	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Arkansas**	1/1/81	3/8/82	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
California	6/1/80	7/1/84	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Colorado		2/27/56	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal

Connecticut	1982	10/1/84	Trial & Appellate**	Civil & Criminal
Florida	7/5/77	5/1/79	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Georgia		5/12/77	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Hawaii	1/1/84	12/7/87	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Idaho ¹	12/4/78 10/9/79	8/27/79 10/1/80	Supreme Ct in Boise Supreme Court on Circuit	
Illinois	1/1/84	1/22/85	Appellate	
Iowa	1/1/80	1/1/82	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Kansas**	9/14/81	9/1/88	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Kentucky		7/1/81	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Louisiana****		4/30/85	Appellate	
Maine***	4/2/82	8/1/94	Trial	Civil
Maryland**	1/1/81 1/1/81	7/1/84	Appellate Trial	Civil
Massachusetts	4/1/80 6/1/80	1/1/83 1/1/83	Appellate Trial	
Michigan	2/1/88	1/13/89	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Minnesota ¹	1/27/78	4/20/83	Appellate	
Mississippi		4/1/01	Supreme Court	Civil & Criminal
Missouri	10/1/92 10/1/92	10/1/94 7/1/95	Appellate Trial	Civil & Criminal
Montana	4/1/78	4/18/80	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Nebraska	10/1/82	1/18/85	Appellate	

Nevada	4/1/80	4/29/88	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
New Hampshire****		1/1/78	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
New Jersey ¹	5/1/79 5/1/79	10/8/80 6/9/81	Appellate Trial	
New Mexico	7/1/80	1/1/83	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
New York ¹		1/1/81	Appellate	
North Carolina	10/18/82	7/25/90	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
North Dakota	2/1/79 9/1/88	7/1/80 7/1/95	Supreme Court Trial	Civil & Criminal
Ohio***	6/1/79	1/1/82	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Oklahoma***	1/1/79	2/22/82	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal*
Oregon**	2/15/89	8/1/92	Trial	Civil & Criminal
Rhode Island	10/1/81	3/8/93	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
South Carolina	10/1/92	9/21/93	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
South Dakota	7/17/01		Supreme Court	
Tennessee**	1/1/96-97	12/30/96	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Texas****		1/1/90	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Utah** ²	1/1/88	8/30/91	Supreme Court	
Vermont	7/1/84	3/12/92	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Virginia	7/1/87	7/1/92	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Washington		9/20/76	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
West Virginia	1/1/79	5/28/81	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
Wisconsin	4/1/78	7/1/79	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal

Wyoming****	8/14/81	12/27/91	Trial & Appellate	Civil & Criminal
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* Consent of accused required in criminal trials

** Consent of some participants required

*** No coverage of individuals who object

**** Subject to approval of the individual court

1 See experimental basis table, also

2 Still photos only in trial courts

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States with Experimental Rules

	EFFECTIVE DATE	PERIOD	LEVEL	DIVISION
Delaware	5/1/82	Extended Indefinitely	Supreme Court	Civil
Idaho ¹	1/4/82 2/15/95	Extended Indefinitely To 2/15/98	Court of Appeals Trial Courts	Civil & Criminal
Indiana	9/96	About one year	Appellate Courts	
Minnesota ^{1**}	4/18/83	To 1/1/94	Trial Courts	Civil & Criminal
New Jersey ¹	1/3/84	Indefinite	Municipal Courts	Civil & Criminal
Pennsylvania ^{**}	10/1/79	Extended Indefinitely	Trial, non-jury	Civil, Superior Court

1 See permanent basis table, also

* Consent of accused required in criminal trials

** Consent of some participants required

*** No coverage of individuals who object

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Special Notes

Federal Courts On September 13, 1990, the Federal Judicial Conference approved a three-year experiment allowing cameras in two appellate courts and six district courts, beginning on July 1, 1991. The experiment was limited to civil cases and gave judges total discretion to refuse, limit, or stop camera coverage. The report on the experiment recommended that coverage continue, but the Judicial Conference voted against coverage. In March 1996 the Judicial Conference authorized coverage in Federal Courts of Appeal.

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Contact the Knowledge & Information Service Office with inquiries regarding
Cameras in the Court
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1-800-616-6164

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